

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of GREAT BRITAIN

Report of the Proceedings of the 70th Annual Conference

held at:

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday,  
13th, 15th and 14th April, 1974

Attendance at Conference:

Friday 13 Branches represented by 32 delegates.  
Not represented, Birmingham and Manchester.

Saturday 13 Branches represented by 29th delegates.  
Not represented, Birmingham and Manchester.

Sunday 14 Branches represented by 30 delegates  
Not represented, Manchester.

Financial Statement:

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Collections	£ 73-82		
Literature sold	23-69	Hall hire	£127-50
Book Department	50-30	(incl. £5 caretaker)	
	<u>£147-81</u>		
Canteen receipts	£59-18		
Canteen expenses	<u>£31-68</u>		
			<u>£27-50</u>



Comrade R. Seidberg was elected Chairman. Comrade O. Blomeley was elected Vice-Chairman, and it was agreed that the Standing Orders Committee act as Tellers.

Westminster: "That the Propaganda, Publicity and C.L. Sales Cttee. and the C.O. be combined in one committee instead of functioning as separate Committees".

Amend.

Haringey "Delete the words 'and the Central Organiser'."

May: On further considering this Resolution the Branch decided that lumping these Committees together would not be a good thing. As C.O. I have devoted as much time as possible on the sub-Committees but about 95% of my time has been taken up by the Propaganda Cttee. as they were below strength. The C.L. Sales Cttee. is an important one, doing vital work but they never meet and have never organised themselves as a Committee for a number of years. We now have a new Committee which we hope will function more efficiently.

W.H. Herts. supported both the Amendment and the amended resolution.

Amendment Carried 16 - 8. Resolution & Amendment

LOST 10-14

Redbridge: "That the Party's name be changed to 'World Socialist Party - Great Britain' and all Companion Parties be urged to make similar amendments"

Amend.

Haringey "Delete the hyphen between 'World Socialist Party' and 'Great Britain' and enclose the words 'Great Britain' in brackets".

Amend.

Swansea "Delete the hyphen and replace with the word 'of'."

Marshall: (Redbridge): We should make it clear that we are a world-wide organisation. People assume that to belong to a Socialist Party does not necessarily mean it is a world-wide organisation - they assume the word 'Socialism' means social reforms or the Labour Party. The Branch is prepared to support the Swansea Amendment, with or without the hyphen. Swansea (Moss) supported the resolution but without the hyphen. The Party is not world-wide at the moment. It has to put its case over in Great Britain - we can only hope that in time the words Great Britain will drop. S.W. London thought it would make it awkward for speakers to explain the change of name from the platform. Ealing opposed to both Amendment and Resolution and rather disparaged this kind of resolution which comes up year after year. People seem to think that to change the name will make a tremendous difference - does a hyphen or no hyphen really matter? May: opposed to both. The implication behind the resolution seems to be that the socialist movement should all be under one umbrella. But do the Companion Parties wish to change their name? We are not a world-wide organisation, some of our Companion Parties have not even the strength of our Central Branch, and to change the name of the S.P.G.B. at this juncture would create confusion. What is to stop one of the national parties who often claim to be socialist, adopt the name, S.P.G.B? A change of name might be all right in ten years time when we might be a large Party and can make an international effect on the political scene. Baldwin, E.C. regretted that the delegates who put this forward were not here to defend their case. You have only to look at the W.S.P.U.S. - Are people there queuing up to join the socialist movement? It is a lazy man's point of view. Workers in each country have to fight their own capitalist class, as Marx pointed out, and capitalism is at present organised on a national basis.

Vallance, Edin. in support. We do not expect people to suddenly flock to us but the point is, which name makes our Object clearer - we do stand for a world-wide system of society.

Swansea Amend. Lost 8 - 26. Haringey Amend. Lost 9 - 26. Redbridge Resolution: Lost 11 - 24

Comrade Skelton (C.B) enquired why so few sub-Committees have made reports to the E.C. The Gen. Sec. replied that the reason is simple. Some Committees are efficient - others you have to chase. I have tried to do this mainly verbally by talking to individuals and there are one or two late reports only dealt with by the E.C. last Tuesday. Some Committees have little to report, i.e. Canteen Cttee. and the Premises Cttee. should have reported because they have been very active. They have had a lot to do.



May as C.O.: As Central Organiser I have not reported, and this is not the first year I have not reported, and in the past nobody has worried. When I have reported nobody has worried either. I have submitted reports, made suggestions etc. but they have been met by a deathly hush. I do not think members read reports. The Parliamentary Cttee. should have reported. S.W. London wanted to contest a Municipal Election in May this year but the Gen. Sec's request for a report on the matter lay unopened in their pigeon-hole for weeks and we were then unprepared. If we are going to take part in Electoral activity the Parliamentary Cttee. should get down to the job of circulating Branches, find out where members live and the best Constituencies to contest. Camden (Lawrence): It is the E.C.'s responsibility to collect information from its sub-Committees and report in a general way. The E.C. should prepare a general report on the Party's activities for the year. This view was supported by Swansea.

Gen. Sec. It would appear that the Committees who do the most work are the few committees who make a report. But remember, there is no way that I or any other E.C. member can get information that is wanted if we don't get a report from the sub-Committee. Ballard, Haringey: drew attention to their resolution to the E.C. of 4th December which reminded the E.C. of its responsibility to report to Conference the relevant facts and the activities of the sub-Committees.

Gen. Sec. gave a summary of the various Committees and gave reasons why some of them did not report - some have really nothing to report and others are too busy to find the time.

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Haringey: "That a committee be set up to investigate the geographical distribution of Central Branch members with a view to solving the problem of servicing them, perhaps by breaking down C.B. into smaller Regional Branches".

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Ballard (Haringey): We are not complaining of the work done by the C.B. Sec, but we think it would be a good idea to find out to what extent members of C.B. are concentrated in particular areas and to look at the possibility of reorganising it - to try and put members in different areas distributed over the country, in touch with one another. We think a couple of members could give the information quite shortly. May, supporting - and also wishing no criticism of the present C.B. Sec, said he is to be congratulated on the way he deals with this Branch, which is one quarter of our membership. It provides half of the total dues paid into the Party. C.B. members are looked after very well indeed, even pampered by the Party. They get individual E.C. Reports and individual copies of all circulars and statements issued by the Party. If this resolution is passed we shall move a floor resolution to the effect that the C.B. Sec. shall be a member of this Cttee. whose main task will be to suggest ways and means of involving C.B. members in the activities of the Party. Lawrence (C.B. Sec): I must say from the outset that it is obvious that I cannot carry on this job for many more years. We have a H.O. Register of U.B. members. I think the idea of regional groups is a dream. Take Liverpool Branch - they live fairly closely together but prefer to join Central Branch. Remember that it costs £5 in postage every time I circularise the members. If you count paper, envelopes and postage, it is probably £10 of Party money spent every time the members receive reports etc. and it can be as much as £20 a month.

Dalgleith, Edinburgh: opposed to Regional Branches - we would like less members in C.B. and think other Branches should take over some of them. Lewisham Wood: opposed. Regional areas will not solve the problem of getting these members together. They are well served at the moment, and if members of C.B. wish to work with others it is up to them.

Gen. Sec. There is a rule which requires anyone who lives where there is a Branch can only be posted to C.B. in exceptional circumstances. Barltrop. Camden: I was a member of C.B. until recently when I transferred to a London Branch, but I live a long way away. The real trouble is that if you are in a Branch which you can't attend regularly you tend to lose touch, and this is an inducement to wish to remain in Central Branch. It is up to Branch secretaries to keep such members in close touch. Now, myself, I have less information than when I was in C.B. - this is the disadvantage of encouraging members to join a Branch which they can't attend regularly. It is also often more difficult because of the transport question for members outside of London to keep in touch than it is for a London member to contact them.



Standing Orders Committee here requested urgency for a ruling regarding the voting strength of S.W. London Branch. At December 1973 they were entitled only to delegates. but shortly after this date the Branch strength was increased to 31, making their voting strength three delegates.

The Chairman recommended that S.W. London have their three delegates for voting purposes.

Fl. Res. Wood & Vanni: "That the three delegates be allowed to sit for S.W. London Branch" Carried 22 - nil

Comrade Ballard, Haringey, also asked for urgency, stating that members of a Group are trying to distribute leaflets outside the Hall and Party members are trying to prevent them. He did not expect this sort of behaviour from members of the S.P.G.B.

(This leaflet, eventually distributed in the canteen and elsewhere, was called "Revolutionary Socialists - What does this Mean Today"? - signed by six Party members).

Flor. Res.

Westminster: "This Conference recommends that the C.B. Secretary shall be a member of the Committee whose main task will be to suggest ways and means of involving C.B. members in the activities of the Party".

Carried 21 - nil

C.B. Secretary stated that he wished it to be placed on record that he will not be able to serve on this Committee.

The Chairman then read greetings from the S.P. of New Zealand and W.S.P.U.S. and best wishes for a successful Conference.

Comrade P. Stare, from Rome, was present and was invited to the platform. He said that 12 years ago he was a member of the S.P.G.B. and was still no less a socialist. He had left this country for Italy for many reasons. He said he was very moved and encouraged to see so many socialists trying to solve their problems and wished it was the same in Italy. There one of the main problems is that there are too many 'socialists' - the Italian Socialist Party, the Socialist Democratic Party, not to mention the Communist Party who also claim to be socialist. The great problem is not only the different 'Socialist' Parties but within the Parties themselves there are differing groups - quite chaotic. In Britain people are much more politically mature. Italy is less democratic, almost dictatorial. If you are in a minority and therefore harmless, that is all right. But as soon as you become important the Government or other Political Parties will try to stop you. In Rome we are trying to form a small group. There are two other socialists in Milan - two newspaper reporters (too important to be able to declare themselves). I would appreciate it if members here who may have an opportunity to get in touch with Italian tourists, would give them my address, or perhaps give their names and addresses to Comrade Goodman.

Haringey "That a World Socialist Assn. be formed in order that socialists who have been members of Companion Parties and are obliged to leave, due to taking up residence abroad and socialists living in countries where there is no Companion Party, but who have passed an entrance test made by a Companion Party, may contribute to the activities of Companion Parties and more effectively co-operate in other ways. That immediate steps be taken to contact our Companion Parties to set up this Association".

Lee (Haringey) When members go abroad they should not be allowed to disappear into limbo. W. London: We already have an Overseas Contacts Sec. and an International Sec. We should not involve ourselves in an additional Association. Swansea, opposing - the idea is pretentious and follows the same line of thinking as the desire to change the name of the Party to the World Socialist Pty. At the moment the idea is unrealistic. Barltrop: Presumably members go abroad for various reasons, perhaps a better job, and they have to weigh up their losses or gains. It is presumptuous to suggest that we should still have the benefit of these members' contribution. It should be remembered that in the past all kinds of problems have arisen with regard to Companion Parties themselves.



If this can happen think of the problems which could arise with individual members over whom the Party must have some control. In this country if a member joined the Communist Party we would know what that Party stood for, but if in Spain, say, he joined an Organisation with a Spanish name who knows what that Organisation stands for? Mid. Herts. in favour - We have as much control over a member wherever he is, Timbuctoo or London. There is only one criterion for membership - acceptance of the Object and D. of P. If the member differs in any way from these principles he can be asked to explain his actions, perhaps through your Overseas Contacts Secretary. It would help members to carry out propaganda.

May. Who would run this Organisation? Will it be run by the E.C? As an E.C. you would have no control over members of a World Association - it might have its own E.C. You would be taking on something which would cater for about 5 or 6 members. Try and build up the Companion Parties. At the moment this idea is a waste of time. Grant. in favour - we should not allow valuable members of the socialist movement to be lost.

#### Resolution LOST 17 - 21

FINANCIAL STATEMENT: The treasurer pointed out a typing error in the Financial Statement - in the Lit. A/c. "S.S" sales for 1972 should have been shown as £383, not £3,837. She also stated that we should remember that we are over-spending our money and relying on receiving legacies. AUDITOR: Our income from sales of the "S.S" is going down in spite of its increased price. We need to increase our sales. The Gen. Sec. pointed out that there is no breakdown at the moment as between sales of the "S.S" and sales of pamphlets etc. and the loss on sales of the "S.S" is not really as large as it appears. Barltrop (S.S.P.C.): Over the last two years the cost of the "S.S" has remained on the whole stable. We have adopted cheaper paper, saving about £30 a month, by having a member collect the "S.S", thus saving the cost of delivery, doing away with three columns instead of two (which cost more), and by making more visits to the printers to prevent the cost of corrections. We cannot, as far as we know, make any more economies. Over the last few months the cost of paper has gone up and shortly there will be a further increase. Added to this the June "S.S" will be a Special Issue with twice as many pages and twice as many copies. Unless these copies are distributed the deficit next year will be even larger. We must sell more - 7 or 8,000 copies a month. I think the price should be increased to 10p. Four more pages could be put in, increasing the cost by 25% and the income by 80%. Cox wondered whether the deficit on the Lit. A/c. was due to unavoidable circumstances or to the fact that Branches do not pay for the literature they receive. May pointed out that we sell a miserable £24 worth of the "W.S", about 40 copies a month, which must give a very bad impression to our Companion Parties. In the accounts, in future, could we not say - Lit. sales so much, Lit. expenses so much?

Chairman here requested delegates to report on the activities of their Branches over the year, in accordance with a Conference ruling past at last Annual Conference.

Camden: Outdoor Meetings regularly held at Tower Hill, very successful. Also ran indoor meetings at Conway Hall and on Sunday evenings at Soho Square.

Faling: We have tried various activities without much success. We have been running Earls Court meetings and hope shortly to take over the Overseas Contacts work and to combine with other Branches' activities - perhaps stage an Exhibition.

Edinburgh: Held meetings on Sundays and sold "S.S" on Saturdays. We held meetings in Dundee more or less regularly. Tried an indoor meeting but had to cancel because of power restrictions. Had a demonstration in Dundee organised within the N.U.M, turning up to sell literature.

Glasgow: Have held regular indoor and outdoor propaganda meetings. Early in 1973 held a series of study classes on 'Political Parties' and 'Economics' - useful to sympathisers and members but lacked the interest and enthusiasm of those held in 1972. We held 100 outdoor meetings, 12 Lit. sales drives, 9 indoor meetings, including a May Day rally and a debate with the Conservationists. In both cases over 90 non-members attended. Eight speakers took part, three being official Party speakers. Lit. sold approx. £98, £94 collected from members and sympathisers, expenses £128. A good year's effort.

Haringey: Have organised two debates and have had regularly Saturday meetings at Kings Cross.



Lewisham: Have lost some members and have had to content ourselves with putting up posters and selling literature at railway stations.

Mid.Herts: We meet twice a month, one for a lecture and discussion. Have made two new members. Our membership is very scattered and it is difficult to get a quorum. Outdoor meetings with no support from London impossible to maintain. Every year there is a "Contact" meeting in Welwyn Garden City - where documents of various organisations are displayed and where you can talk to people. We found it very successful last year.

Redbridge: Main activity Branch lectures. Thanks to Publicity Cttee. have been able to attract visitors to our meetings. Some attend regularly and one has joined. Will be attempting outdoor meetings in Northwood during the summer.

S.W.London: Have regular Branch meetings and have made three new members. Have provided speakers for evening meetings at Earls Court and for Hyde Park. Provided candidates for G.L.C. Elections last year. During the General Election this year distributed leaflets, with two not very successful outdoor meetings.

Swansea: We are one of the smallest Branches in the Party - 10 members, average attendance 8. Three live a long way away, two 40 miles away. General activities very difficult. Have done some door to door canvassing. In the Election we distributed 4,500 leaflets. There is no possibility of holding outdoor meetings in Swansea anywhere - too much traffic. Tried one outdoor meeting, well advertised, but result, nil.

W.London: We hold regular Committee Meetings. We have a tape recorder which is used as a means of stimulating discussion - taking any subject - fairly successful.

Westminster: Made new members and lost a few - membership scattered but a successful year. Have run meetings in Hyde Park on Sundays and mid-week and were very active in the Election campaign. We have several qualified speakers. Have had good lit. sales and made a number of contacts with overseas visitors.

Aberdeen Group: Have only 4 members and two sympathisers who will probably join. Have regular meetings and have produced several leaflets. Interest is being stimulated in the N.E. We receive help from Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Merseyside Group: Have had to change from a Branch to a Group. We are very isolated and have had no support from H.O. in spite of requests for assistance.

May. C.O.: For the first time for many years Branches have got some idea what other Branches have been doing. In conjunction with the Special June Issue of the "S.S" we are organising a Exhibition at H.O. to run from the 15th to the 22nd June. Branches will be asked to take charge of the Exhibition. We have been granted a sum of £160. We want the Exhibition to appear somewhat professional and not too amateurish. It will mark the 70 years of the "S.S" and of the S.P.G.B. I ask members if they have any old photographs of Party activity, to

let H.O. have them - they can be blown up. Also posters and leaflets, and material that we have publicised at discussions. There will be a Committee to go into this, and we want the material urgently.

#### S.S. Investigation Committee's Report (and resolutions re "S.S" on Agenda):

Comrade Vanni drew attention to the statement in the S.S.P.C.'s Report on the "S.S" - that "we are a sub-Committee of the E.C. .... and have a principal duty to see that everything in the "S.S" is in line with accepted Party views".

Gen. Secretary: Comrade Vanni is referring to an article in the February "S.S" of 1974 on 'Value', about which there is some controversy among Party members. We have had letters from Comrade D'Arcy and also from Haringey and Glasgow on the matter. The E.C. is looking into this but they have not made a decision on the question.

It would be better to let the E.C. thrash the matter out and then, if you wish, you can raise further questions. Barltrop, S.S.P.C.: We are considering last year's work and this matter does not arise from anything you have before you. It resulted from an article in the Feb. "S.S" of this year. The E.C. and other members are going into the matter thoroughly, doing a lot of reading. Without this



preparation it would be ludicrous for Conference to discuss it now. At the moment we are not in a position to discuss it properly.

It was agreed 14 - 3 to carry on with the Agenda and leave the above item for the moment.

Ambridge: I am concerned with the technical aspect of producing the "S.S". We have nothing to be complacent about. Do we have to rely always on voluntary efforts of members? - and selling a few copies a month? Young: Year after year we have the same arguments. Various methods of selling the "S.S" have been tried with no effect whatever - our circulation remains about the same. One central point is the quality of the material in it. We should see that every article is polemic and there should be more attack.

D'Arcy (for the Committee): This Committee was set up by Conference last year and we worked on the assumption that the Terms of Reference would follow the line of the Conference resolution. When the Committee presented this report to the E.C. the E.C. would have nothing to do with it and put it back to Conference. I think the E.C. should have gone through it. The Committee were not committed to making any recommendations at all. All members of the Party who were engaged in the production and sale of the "S.S" were asked to make some kind of statement. I accepted all these reports and some of the recommendations have come from Branches. Regarding the organisation for distributing the "S.S", we have come to the conclusion that we have the best organisation we can expect from volunteers. The most serious aspect is getting articles. Our average circulation, should we carry on as we are doing, is under 5,000 - in 1937 it was nearer 8,000. We give 400 free to the Americans. We used to have an arrangement with W.H. Smith & Sons to display the "S.S" on a sale or return basis but this was not very satisfactory, and it was displayed badly, and for the numbers they were prepared to take it was not worth the trouble. We approached a firm of commercial distributors but the cost was prohibitive. The circulation of the "S.S" must be under the control of the Party. It must not be shoved in a corner and forgotten by people who are not really interested in selling it. We should look at this whole matter as within the Party.

The "S.S" costs £2,560 a year. Colour etc. does not add anything to sales. We consider that if the content is improved it would get us a higher circulation figure. The view that the "S.S" sales should depend on colour, cartoons etc. is a wrong attitude. It is the duty of every member to try and sell the "S.S" whether it has colour or not.

T.D'Arcy: We wondered what is meant by the words "attractive layout" (Edin). Our view is that to adopt professional techniques will mean the "S.S" will lose some of the words it contains at present, about 13,000. A professional designer is not interested in the case of the Party is putting forward but to produce an attractive pamphlet. Re price, we should be placing emphasis not on an increased price but on increased sales. If we increased the price we should only be getting more money for the same amount of sales. W.London: not against colour which can be useful at times. Re quality of articles, this is mainly a matter of opinion.

Walters, Westminster: The most important point which has arisen in the discussion is that the "S.S" bores people and that the circulation is poor. I would say that in relation to any other journal of its kind from a political point of view, disseminating as it does, socialist ideas, the "S.S" has never been equalled. If you introduce commercial distributors the cost will further increase the present deficit and I do not think you will get good results anyway. These people are not interested in the quality of the "S.S" as a political journal but in making a profit, and you must have a price that will give them a profit. The most important question is that of distribution, and that is our responsibility. Every Party member could do a lot more. Critchfield, Ealing: I would like to take issue with one of the statements in the Report - that the poor content of the "S.S" is the main reason for the drop in sales. There is no evidence to support this. If there is any reason for variation in sales it is probably due to a coincidence of various factors. The only occasion in recent years when the circulation was increased dramatically in one month was on the issue, the Centenary of the First Publication of 'Capital', which combined colour and content.

Robertson, Auditor: drew attention to the fact that we have taken on the job of sending the "S.S" out every month to about 400 Libraries in America. There are about 120 Libraries in England, and in Oxford where I live, there are about 35 Colleges. I thought it would be a good idea to write to every library asking them to take the "S.S" for 3 months. I got 3 replies! I wrote again, sending samples, asking if they would like further copies - only one replied. How do we know that



the libraries in America are placing the "S.S" in their libraries and whether anybody is reading it? You might enquire of the librarians how much the "S.S" is used? you would be luck to get a reply from 10 or 20 people. It is a sheer waste of money and effort. Re front page of the "S.S", I agree that you can't judge a sausage by its skin, but what ab out having good content and a good cover?

Bradley, Haringey. If you have a poor quality journal and distribute it you damage yourself. If you distribute it widely you do yourself more damage, and with efficient advertising even more damage. We must maintain a good standard of quality and presentation, but we will not get a high standard of distribution without commercial help. Barltrop: I would like to correct a serious misstatement about the actual circulation - that large numbers of unsold copies are at H.C. We have had 4,500 copies in winter and 5,000 in summer and some of these issues have been sold out. In fact, we do sell most of the copies which are printed. Re libraries, several hundred copies are given away every month. It is a publicity venture and you should see it like this. Looking at the circulation of Left Wing papers, they are below ours. I only know of two Left Wing papers with larger circulation than ours - all the others are about the 2,000 mark.

Commercially, you lose control over the distribution. Having advertisements, as some journals do, would solve our problems but there are strong reasons against this. Re colour, cartoons etc, 'do they add to the circulation? This is almost irrelevant. Let us not stifle members. We are quite keen to have cartoons etc. we are quite keen to have them but we do not get them. Regarding quality, as with circulation, I think the "S.S" is not at all bad. We get many expressions of praise for the "S.S", but remember, we are stuck with the articles we get. The Delegate Meeting was enthusiastic about a special issue on the Anniversary of the Party - we are going to have one but without the help of members who were so keen to have it. Re content, I think for a certain period the "S.S" did lose the confidence of the Party. It is essential that members should believe in it. Re covers, the Committee is not stuck on covers. We want it to look attractive but it means extra cost.

There is a remark in the report of the Publicity Committee which made my eyebrows shoot up - "Throughout the year we have been in close touch with the S.S.P.C.". This is not so but we hope we shall see them. Thomas, S.S.P.C. Comrade D'Arcy has explained why the report did not make more explicit recommendations, but it is a pity that delegates have not been more forthcoming. The S.S.P.C. is not responsible for writing the "S.S". At the moment two members only are regular contributors. What does the Party want of the "S.S"? This question is never resolved. Some want it topical, others want it more theoretical. Theoretical articles are rarely forthcoming. Regarding the 'notice-board' aspect of the "S.S", about Party activities, Companion Parties etc, you do not give us a hard and fast line to follow. There is no evidence of the supposed low quality of the "S.S". I think the Investigation Committee started with this premise which is reflected in the Report. Re covers, what do you want? I preferred the "S.S" when it had a mixture of two and three column layout but to keep costs down we decided to have two-column layout all through.

The Resolution from Edinburgh to raise the price of the "S.S" to 10p was LOST 7-30. Swansea's Amendment was LOST 8 - 30, and Lewisham's Amendment was LOST 8 - 29.

Haringey's resolution to re-adopt lively designs on the front cover was Carried 20-10.

Westminster's Amendment "on suitable occasions and with colour where desirable" was Lost 11-20.

Camden's ~~Addendum~~ "On appropriate occasions" was Lost 14-21.

There was little discussion on these Resolutions, Edinburgh stating that the "S.S" is unattractive - look at the magazines today, all jostling for position. The Party is living in the past with just writing on the cover.



Edinburgh: "That this Conference is of the opinion there is not enough Party literature on Trade Unions and that more attention should be paid in the "S.S" to this lack".

Edinburgh: thought that Trade Unionism has not been treated well by the Party. There is a lack of adequate Party literature on the subject. May: We have had a leaflet 'The Right to Strike, which was a good one, and there are sufficient articles in the "S.S" on the subject. Cox: It occurs to me that this item has arisen not only because there has been a maelstrom in T.U. circles between orthodox Trade Unions and the 'Revolutionary Left' but because there is a feeling that perhaps the Party has not yet sorted out its attitude towards Trade Unionism. There is no doubt that other members as well as myself over the years have gathered that many newer members in the Party are unhappy about the Party's traditional position on Trade Unionism. I am unhappy when I hear one member having to insist on the necessity of workers to organise in Trade Unions, and put the proposition that this activity, whilst obviously will never lead to socialism, nevertheless does show an interest in the political situation and is a necessary part of the working class struggle. Another speaker dismisses this in a few words to the effect that you can hardly call Trade Union activity any part of the working class struggle in the sense of political struggle, and therefore is irrelevant. It is high time that we stated our position clearly and not have it said that we have a divided viewpoint on Trade Unionism and the attitude of the Party to it.

Baldwin: This is an important topic. Cox seems to think there is a lack of clarity about the Party's case on Trade Unions. It is a pity that some members when joining the Party did not take the trouble to find out what the Party's case on Trade Unions is. Every time the workers sneeze or have a prolonged coffee break and protest they think the revolution is just round the corner. Strikes are essentially a defensive rearguard kind of action. They may win the day over some improvement in wages and conditions. They are essentially a weapon in the hands of the working class, and the Party recognises this. But how much out of date are present Trade Unions? Over 100 years. They have failed fundamentally because of a lack of class consciousness and the need to proclaim the abolition of the wages system. Over the last century we have had the same round of strikes, fighting the same battles, running fast to stand still. It doesn't seem to have heightened the class consciousness of the working class at all. We are supposed to re-cast the Party's attitude to Trade Unions in favour of something new, and that the Party should rally to the side of the Trade Unions and support all kinds of agitation instead of trying to make socialists out of Trade Unionists. Articles on Trade Unions need to be more intensely critical of their middle-headed conduct in their general immersion in the day to day activities of the working class. The function of the "S.S" is not to join the back-slapping fraternity by putting the Unions on the back but to put a more critical attitude in terms of Marxism and the class struggle.

Hardy: It is not true to say that the Party has no case on Trade Unions. The Party has a case. It is the one which was discussed when the Party was formed, in a statement drawn up and endorsed by a Party Poll. If the Party is to alter it it will have to undo what it has already done. The statement said - "The Party would give support to Trade Unions when the action of a Trade Union is based on a clear recognition of the workers' position under capitalism and the class struggle resulting therefrom". We say to the Trade Unions that we support them to the extent that they recognise the class interests, not the sectional interests. Trade Union disputes are often over before you can adequately deal with them. The most valuable thing is to have a member in the Trade Union during a dispute who could say what the conflict was about and to give the S.S.P.C. some material from first hand.

D'Arey: If you were writing about Trade Unions, could you say that the Trade Unions of today resemble anything like the Trade Unions of yesterday? What would you say about the Trade Unions that support the Labour Party? Trade Unions are more interested in the Stock Exchange in order to increase their funds. It is better for the Party to stick to its basic background case on Trade Unions. We do not need more literature at the moment.

Resolution Carried 15 - 14

Haringey: "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to inaugurate an 'Open Letter' column in the "S.S" to which members and non-members can contribute their comments on articles in the "S.S" and on current affairs etc."



Amendment, Lewisham: "Delete the words 'an 'Open Letter' and replace with 'a 'Your Letters' '. And delete all after the "S.S" on line two".

Haringey: Basically we mean something different from the present arrangement by which carefully selected letters are dealt with. We want a 'letters column' where members and non-members can write to each other. The S.S.P.C. could still put in a reply themselves if they wished. It would encourage members who are not confident enough to write long articles to raise issues on which they are not able to write articles.

Judd, Lewisham: This could mean that anyone with a bee in his bonnet could air his views, which would lead to acrimony among members, and the S.S.P.C. would not have any proper control. We want letters in the "S.S" to come from opponents, and the Party's position explained in a proper manner.

Gey: The "S.S" is not the right vehicle for arguing aspects of the Party's policy. May, Westminster, opposed both the resolution and the amendment.

Thomas, S.S.P.C.: It is the policy of the S.S.P.C. to print letters which we consider suitable. The idea that an 'open letter' column would encourage young writers to write for the "S.S" is fallacious. The Party is divided on some issues, i.e. Trade Unions, but the "S.S" must reflect the Party's case. This resolution would allow members to slang one another in the "S.S" and the "S.S" would lose its chief function of propagating socialism.

Baldwin: Since we now have the unsavoury position where people claiming to be members of the Party send out their own literature on Women's Lib, Strikes, Squatting etc., do we now have to lamely sit back while they take over the "S.S" as well? There would be no agreed Party case, but dissidents putting the Party right. The "S.S" would become the vehicle for those who want to attack the Party. As a propagandist organisation our resources are few and weak enough without allowing this small voice to be just a sounding board for those who want to use it to attack the Party. If you read some of the stuff circulating in the name of 'controversy' it would appear to be anti-socialist and anti-S.P.G.B. Genuine enquirers and opponents have always been welcome and encourages to write their criticisms and ideas in the "S.S" - it is an important part of our propaganda to reply to such opposition, but it is obvious that there could soon be no S.P.G.B. if its only publication for the propagation of its case were taken over by a minority who have not the courage to leave the Party but remain in and erode it, and are in opposition to it.

Ambridge: Remember we are not talking about a 'letters' column but about an 'open letters' column. If this idea was adopted you would take away from your Editorial Committee the right to edit. The whole idea is dangerous from the Party point of view.

Ballard, Haringey: Who determines the contents of the "S.S"? We are talking about an 'Open Letters' column, a small section of it. It would give the S.S.P.C. some idea of the sort of issues which non-members and members themselves are particularly interested in and want covered in more detail. There is no question of the journal or the column being taken out of the hands of the S.S.P.C., and the letters would also be under their control. We are agreed on basic principles but there is room for disagreement on many details, and we do no good by suggesting that we all have the same ideas as to what is going. We should not be creating the impression that the Party case has an existence of its own independent of the membership. There are differences, better aired in the "S.S" than on the E.C. We could all contribute to a letters column and disagree if we wish. Whether it would be a success or not would depend on the members as a whole.

Amendment LOST 7-30, Resolution LOST 12-26

Haringey: That this Conference instructs the E.C. to re-adopt the policy of having lively designs on the front cover of the "S.S".

Addendum, Westminster: "Add.....'on suitable occasions and in colour where desirable'".

Addendum, Camden: "Add at the end the words 'on appropriate occasions'".

Ballard: thought that the designs by Comrade Selwyn which he did for the "S.S" a few years ago were especially good. Lewisham supported Westminster - "on suitable occasions". Judd, Lewisham said he was not interested personally in colours, pictures or cartoons - you can find them in newspapers. Socialist ideas cannot be put across with colour and designs. Ideas are what matter. Westminster: Pictures can sometimes speak louder than words.



Barltrop: An attractive front is an asset but they are aids only and they are no substitute for reading. If all these three resolutions were carried nothing would have changed. It is our policy to have lively designs on suitable occasions, and colour also. Colour is a matter of cost, which is always the Committee's problem. None of the enthusiasts for colour has said who would do these attractive designs. Glasgow thought that a good cover sells the "S.S" but Mid.Herts: thought it is the person who sells the "S.S" - it is not always the cover which decides what people buy. People's wants are different. It pays to have a different cover design from month to month.

Camden Addendum: Lost 14 - 21 Westminster Addendum Lost 11-20.

Resolution Carried 20-10

Westminster: "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to urgently investigate the possibility of publishing future pamphlets as articles in the "S.S" over a period of, say six months, with a suitable foreword. Extra copies of these articles to be printed (separately and in addition to the normal "S.S" printing run), collated and provided with an attractive cover for sale as pamphlets".

Amendment.

Haringey: "Delete all after printed"

May: Our last pamphlet was The Socialist Party and War, nearly three years ago, and the cost was then in the region of £800. We still have some left. Today the same pamphlet would cost at least £50 more. Most of our pamphlets have been about the same size. Branches are asking for pamphlets to be published when we know our financial resources do not run to it. There is a pamphlet on Ireland which the E.C. will eventually make a decision on. If the E.C. decide to publish it Westminster would like to see it serialised in the columns of the "S.S". At the end of 6 months you would have your written material for a pamphlet for sale for at least one-third of the cost. Swansea: (free hand), supported Westminster but opposed the amendment. Hardy: re the Irish pamphlet, if you run it through the "S.S" you must remember that four chapters have already been run through the "S.S" and it would have to be done again. Barltrop. This method will only be satisfactory with shorter pamphlets. For 6 months five pages of the "S.S" would be devoted to one pamphlet. Would members be happy about this? We have found that members are not very happy with drawn out serials anyway.

Haringey Amendment Lost 4 - 32, Westminster Resolution Lost 17-20

#### AMENDMENTS to RULE:

Rule 1.

(Camden)

"Membership Cards to be issued every two years " Carried 31 - 7

Rule 2.

Swansea

"Members to pay 10p instead of 25p per month"

Lost 10 - 20

Rule 2.

Swansea

"Members over 65 under no obligation to pay dues".

Lost 3 - 33

Rule 2.

Edinburgh

"To increase dues to 50p instead of 25p per month towards a Head Office Assistant".

Lost 10-20

Rule 3.

Haringey

"The word 'Branch' to be changed to 'Companion Party'". Lost 10-12

Rule 3.

Haringey

"Delete the whole of the last sentence which commences 'A member taking up...'"

Lost 10 - 12

The amendments to Rules 9 and 12 were not put in view of the above.



Rule 13  
Westminster

To read - "Any member of the E.C. absent from the E.C. in excess of 6 meetings in any one quarter shall lapse from the E.C. unless the absence is due to Party work and of a duration previously approved by resolution of the E.C". Carried 21 - 17

Rule 13  
Camden

"That the E.C. meet fortnightly"

Lost 6 - 32

Rule 19  
Mid.Herts.

"giving the Gen.Sec. Treasurer and C.O. the right to be ex-officio E.C. members".

Lost 6 - 25

Rule 20  
Haringey

" On line two, after the words 'E.C', delete the words ', (comma) such report to' and replace with the words 'and items submitted by Branches. The E.C's Report shall'..."

Carried 21 - 14

Rule 31

Mid.Herts. (a) "Delete the first part of the first sentence up to and including the word 'Branch' on line 2 and replace with 'All charges made against any Party member shall first be submitted in writing, by the member or members making the charge, to the Secretary of the charged member's Branch for that Branch to consider'. (Then to follow with the existing words '..and a copy supplied..'etc"

Rule 31 (b) "On line 7, between the words 'Committee' and 'An', insert the words 'The C.B. Secretary shall refer all charges made against C.B. members to the E.C. for its consideration.'"

(a) Amendment Lost 15 - 22

(b) Amendment Lost 15 - 20

There was little discussion on the above, the main discussion on Amendments to Rule related to

Rule 15.  
Glasgow

"On line 7 delete the words 'or deposit'".

Glasgow Branch had previously expressed their views in a statement to Branches. Judd, opposing, disagreed that there was a moral principle at stake. We are members of the capitalist system and it is impossible for any organisation or individual to dissociate himself from the capitalist world in which we live - even to accept money from legacies, as we do, is hypocritical. Barltrop, supporting Glasgow: Two things are being mixed up here. No principle is involved but there is a practical one. Interest we could receive from the investment of £15,000 could mean that the "S.S" would be published from an investment source. The matter is entirely a practical one. Mid.Herts, opposing: You are likely to earn on our recent legacy about £700, which would pay for the issue of three "S.S". Anything which helps us on the road to socialism is correct. You do not object to a striker going on strike to increase his wages. We have Party members who own slum houses and yet have contributed more than others to the Party. They support us out of their surplus value. We have some money at the moment but it will not last very long. There is no need for investment accounts. The whole purpose of Party funds is to keep them as liquid as possible, and as regards a current account, Banks offer money to armament manufacturers. There is no moral principle at stake.

May, Westminster: Our Branch is not unanimous. There is a lot of rubbish talked about this subject. If Comrade Judd thinks that the £15,000 from Comrade Bailey's estate has anything to do with the exploitation of the working class, think again. The late Comrade Boucher did not exploit the working class. At the moment you give your money to the Bank but you do not know what they do with it and you say you are not interested. You only get 10%. If you invested the £15,000 in any Local Authority Bond for 6 or 12 months at least you would know that the Local Authority will be using it for such things as road-sweeping etc. and they will give you 14 or 15 per cent - (six monthly issues of the "S.S"), on six months call.



Swansea, opposed. It has been suggested that you are 'compelled by capitalism' - This is not so. We do not have to put money in a deposit account. We ourselves should be the deciding factor. Hardy: Whatever the merits or otherwise of having a deposit account, Comrade Knight was saying that because we put money to a good use it does not matter where it comes from. The question is a practical one. On the platform, if you let it be known where your money comes from you are giving your speakers a difficult job to defend themselves. Lawrence, Camden: We are all involved in capitalism and there are things we can't do anything about, but we, as members of the S.P.G.B., do not have to make money by having a deposit account. That is different. Do not give your opponents on the political scene something to thrash you with. Glasgow: We agree with Camden - it is a question for the Party. We should not be discussing where best to place our investments. We are compromising with the capitalist system and we are opposed on principle.

Resolution Lost 15 - 22

Edinburgh "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to produce a pamphlet on Trade Unions if funds are available for the production of pamphlets"

Haringey

Addendum: "Add 'and all forms of the industrial struggle'".

Dalglish: There are only a few pages on this in the "S.S" and a few leaflets, which do not cover our case adequately, i.e. they do not cover 'workers' control'. A pamphlet would dispose of some of the present confusion.

Haringey's Amendment was LOST 15 - 23, Edinburgh Resolution CARRIED 24 - 14

Westminster: "That in view of the present limited financial resources of the Party the E.C. be instructed to give priority to the production of the following re-written pamphlets - 'The Case for Socialism' and 'Principles and Policy'.

Amendment "On line 3, insert the word 'completely' in front of the word

Haringey: re-written' and delete 'The Case for Socialism'"

There was little discussion on the above. Edinburgh wished priority to be given to the Trade Union pamphlet.

Haringey amendment LOST 11 - 24, Westminster Resolution Carried 19-17

Swansea "This Conference instructs the E.C. to adopt the following procedure re the production of pamphlets - 1. No pamphlets shall be produced except by instruction of the Party. 2. The E.C. on receiving the pamphlet from the Pamphlets Cttee, shall appoint a small ad hoc Cttee. of the E.C. of not more than 4 members who shall consider the pamphlet, make such amendments as necessary and report to the whole of the E.C. on its suitability for publication".

Amend. Westminster: "In part 1 delete the word 'produced' and replace with the word 'published'.

Amend. Lewisham: "Delete all the resolution after the word "E.C" on line 1 and replace with the words "that no pamphlets shall be produced except by instruction of the Party"".

Swansea: This is an attempt to speed up the work of getting pamphlets produced. We are appalled at the length of time it has taken to deal with the Irish pamphlet. No pamphlet should be produced unless the Party has made a call for it.

May. Westminster is concerned with publication, not production. The pamphlet if the Swansea resolution was passed, would be under the jurisdiction of a small committee and not the E.C. With the Irish pamphlet there was originally only one copy only. Copies should be made for all E.C. members if you wish to save time. We suggest that when a new pamphlet is produced it should go to the Committee. If Conference has asked for it and it is what we want. Each E.C. member should be able to take home his copy, read it and take notes, and these notes should be given to the Pamphlets Committee for consideration.



Lewisham supported Westminster's proposition. Miller suggested that the reason why the Irish pamphlet has taken so long to consider is because the E.C. are against Comrade Buick. Hardy: Our present method is always successful and it can be done quite quickly. What happened with the Irish pamphlet was that the Pamphlets Committee were not agreed to start with. We told the E.C. we did not wish to go on with it unless we could get general agreement or unless this was the sort of pamphlet they wanted. Did they want us to go on with it? It is always very difficult to work with only one copy. Gen. Secretary: Whether you provide the E.C. or the Committee with copies it will always take time to get a pamphlet out. The job must be done thoroughly without rushing it. The Delegate Meeting said 'speed up consideration'. The E.C. turned it down as it was and it went back for modification, and they still did not agree. Most members of the E.C. were convinced it was not a pamphlet they should bother with and were not prepared to spend money on it. And the E.C. did go out of its way to have special meetings merely to vet it.

Lewisham Amendment LOST 5-32.  
Westminster " LOST 12-21  
Swansea Resolution LOST 11-27

#### Floor Resolution

Westminster: "This Conference recommends the E.C. not to go ahead with the publication of the pamphlet on Ireland in view of the Conference decision on pamphlets"

May: This pamphlet has been before the E.C. for 18 months and five Branches have already asked the E.C. not to publish it.

Edinburgh: The Irish situation is still a serious one and socialist views on it should be put across. Barltrop: If this pamphlet were published who would distribute it? Ireland is out. The S.P. of Ireland has difficulty keeping alive. D'Arcy: I was a member of the Pamphlets Committee who dealt with the pamphlet when it came before the E.C. There was disagreement on its contents. It was considered too historical and did not make a socialist analysis of the history of Ireland. It repeated the things you can read in other magazines, and it did not deal with the present situation in Ireland. Since the pamphlet was written there has been the abolition of the Stormont Government, and there are other factors which make the pamphlet out of date. If you go ahead and publish it will need a lot of amendment and some of it will have to be re-written.

Bradley Haringey: referred to E.C. Resolution (70th E.C) "That the pamphlet as revised be approved for publication" (Cd. 7-3. Gen. Secretary pointed out that this did not necessarily imply publication but approval to go ahead with quotations for printing costs etc. Since then five Branches have stated they do not wish to go ahead with it, and incidentally, four members of the present E.C. have not yet read it. Cox: I was originally in favour of publication but on second thoughts I think it would make an excellent history book but would not be a good pamphlet for the Party to publish. Glasgow were opposed to publication.

Westminster Resolution CARRIED 20 - 6

Westminster: "The necessity for appointing a Party Press Officer, or Committee in order to make prompt challenges to erroneous references to either socialism or the Party: to make our case known wherever possible: to make challenging responses to assertions in the media".

May: We have been handicapped in the past during elections by not having a Press Officer at H.O. who could reply to enquiries from the Press and from the Broadcasting authorities who wished to know what the position was - were we putting forward a candidate? We need someone who could reply quickly to statements in the Press giving erroneous definitions of socialism and mis-statements about the Socialist Party. Swansea were in favour. W. London not in favour - would prefer letters from individual members. Lewisham (free hand) - in favour, and also favoured letters from individual members not writing as members of the Party. This would be the best way to get a letter published. A similar view was expressed by Mid. Herts. Also Redbridge. Hardy pointed out the necessity for defining clearly and narrowly the function of the Press Officer. He was likely



to be overloaded with letters from Branches requesting him to deal with items in the Press - and Branches should not be discouraged from doing some of this work themselves. Comrade May agreed that the Press Officer's work should be clearly defined. He should be able to write letters to Editors officially on behalf of the Party.

Resolution CARRIED 16 - nil

Floor Res:

Westminster: "This Conference recommends the E.C. to consider the appointment of a Party Press Officer or Committee in order to make prompt challenges to erroneous references to either socialism or the Party: to make our case known wherever possible: to make challenging responses to assertions in the media".

Carried 16 - nil

Haringey: "The need for Branches to add to their Branch Agendas the item 'Local Newspaper Publicity'".

Haringey were firmly of the view that regular scrutiny of their local papers would prove very useful for publicity, if Branches ensured that several letters were sent each week in response to published items.

There was little discussion on this.

Westminster were in

favour - Mid.Herts. against.

Westminster: "The need for the Propaganda Cttee. to set up the necessary organisation to collate useful information, quotations etc. for circulation to Branches, Party speakers and writers".

May: wished the Party to re-instate Speakers Notes which had been done in the past - the Propaganda Committee would be the best people to get this going.

Baldwin: This has been tried twice before and provided a useful adjunct to speakers' knowledge, but they should stick to one subject and not range over too wide a field.

Westminster: "Is the appointment of a full time paid Head Office Assistant necessary?"

Gen. Secretary read the resolution in E.C. Report of the 15th Meeting from Camden Branch - "That the Branch recommends that the money received in respect of a full-time H.O. Asst. should be returned to those members donating it for this specific purpose, in view of the fact that the Party does not wish to proceed with this appointment" - and stated that the matter will be considered by the E.C. in two weeks time. It seemed to be the general opinion amongst the delegates who spoke on this matter that a full time H.O. Asst. was not really necessary, although two delegates thought that with a full time assistant more work could be done at H.O. for the Party in the way of writing or speaking - or he could take care of the Literature Room which is in a deplorable state at the moment.

Glasgow and Swansea Branches deplored what they considered the rather mean attitude of members in contributing so small an amount as £200 approx towards a full time assistant, only 20 members contributing. This view was not shared by Lewisham who pointed out that at the Delegate Meeting there were members who obviously were not in favour of a full time assistant and therefore would not contribute anyway. Comrade Young pointed out that members have families to bring up and other commitments, and that voluntary work is always better.

Gen. Secretary here drew attention to the need for a Librarian, a Party Funds Organiser and a Companion Party's Publications Secretary, for all of which we had received no nominations.

Comrade Vanni pointed out the discrepancy in the membership figures given in the E.C.'s Report compared with those shown in the Ballot Committee's report. He suggested that ballot papers should be sent to the Secretary of the Branch and not to individuals. The Gen. Sec. said he would look into the matter.

The E.C.'s Report to Conference was then adopted on the motion of Giffis & Kerr.



Westminster:"The Problem of the dearth of qualified Speakers"

May: This shortage has now reached the stage where the actual work of the Propaganda Committee is extremely hampered. Outdoor meetings in London have declined and some must be done if we are to carry on with outdoor meetings. Haringey Branch has run about 12 meetings recently but only two of the speakers were qualified. Others were Party members, and this is against the general practice of the Party. A Speakers' Class will shortly commence and young members who want to speak should get along. Outdoor speaking is by no means dead, and we are constantly getting requests from other organisations for a speaker.

Baldwin: There are outdoor speaking stations which ~~were allowed to collapse~~ and there are stations which could be opened up and used. What is lacking is enthusiasm.

Vallance: I object to the Speakers Test which introduces grades of members into the Party - members are socially equal. It should not be obligatory to have to pass the Speakers Test. Where does this ruling come from? Young:

pointed out Rule 18 which allowed an unqualified speaker to speak if a qualified speaker was present to ensure that the Party's case is always put. Gen. Secretary

pointed out that the E.C. has recently discussed this matter and that he has prepared a report for their consideration. He drew attention to a Conference ruling - "That the E.C. be recommended to draw up a list of questions for all

speakers before they are allowed to speak on behalf of the Party". Hardy:

Regarding the Speakers Test, Edinburgh should not be afraid of this test. I have been on the panel for many examinations and we considered that the test is helpful and gives members confidence. We go over a number of aspects of the Party's case and find out if the applicant is familiar with the sort of questions he may get.

The test is designed as a supplement to education.

Swansea:"The Future of the Party's Electoral Activity"Ambridge:

not

What we would like is/to alter our usual procedure regarding Electoral action but to see if we can improve the way we go about it. What is the purpose of contesting? - To intensify our propaganda efforts. In 1945, due to the circumstances of the time, there was enthusiasm, and we got value in propaganda and publicity. Since then the enthusiasm has to some extent died down. Can we improve our methods? Could we not combine the putting forward of candidates with the method adopted at the last Election?

May: At the last Election we produced 25,000 copies of an Election Manifesto which cost £150. The majority were distributed in London but thousands went to Swansea, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and to some C.B. members. Adverts. in the Guardian, New Statesman by H.O. cost - N.S. £160, Guardian approx. £330. (The Guardian inserted an incorrect advert. in the London issue but we are getting another free insertion shortly). In addition, Westminster inserted a statement in Ham & High and the W.L. Express costing £83 and the expenses were borne by Westminster. S.W. London also put an advert. in the Sth London Press costing £50, the bill for which went to H.O. Total cost to H.O. approx. £700 and to Westminster, £83.

We have had replies from about 125 people in all, all of whom had to send money. 30 people took out subscriptions for 6 months and we sold various pamphlets - Total literature sold approx. £85/90. What Branches did was over and above this. Westminster distributed some 8,000 leaflets in the Hampstead area, had a lit. sales drive in the Market Place etc. and sold 350 copies of the "S.S". They also had a very good outdoor meeting in Hampstead. We should now be in a position to have candidates as well, remembering it will cost us £150. We must see that we are not caught out like last time.

Floor Res.

Lewisham:

"That this Conference recommends to the E.C. that the Party shall put forward at least one candidate at every General Election".

Rose, Lewisham: urged that we should always have a panel of candidates ready to take part and Branches should now be preparing themselves. Cottis: supported. The area should be selected now. Westminster: We were caught last time by a snap election and although we got good results our position was a negative one. Any campaign in the future should be with a candidate. W. London: We have always opposed electoral action at the present time because the majority of the working class are not receptive to our ideas. A lot of development is needed for the working class take note of our case. The best thing is to put out a statement of our views and distribute it as widely as possible.



May: It is clear that we are committed to contest and Westminster would like to contest Hampstead. Delegates should decide now and let the Parliamentary Cttee. have their views as to what we can do for about £700 that might have greater impact. You will need 25,000 leaflets, £150, 25,000 envelopes, £50, Candidate £150 = £350. Should we spend £200 on a Manifesto or £350 on a Guardian advert? The choice is ours. Baldwin: The so-called 'Revolutionary Party' which arose recently pipped us at the post with 15 candidates. In 1945 we could muster two - today we have none. Unless our day to day activities culminate in contesting elections we have, for all practical purposes, ceased to be a Political Party. I would like to see four candidates put forward, and I deny that workers are not receptive to our case - they are more so. Swansea: wanted our efforts spread as widely as possible so that comrades outside London can help.

Resolution CARRIED 20 - 2

Westminster: re Women's Lib. The Branch's resolution was completely re-worded by the Camden Amendment which was - "That this Conference holds that membership of Women's Liberation Organisations is incompatible with membership of the Party".

(This was discussed in conjunction with Haringey's Amendment and Haringey's Item - "Ideas of sex roles as an obstacle to socialist consciousness").

T.D'Arcy: Westminster carried out their own investigation into Women's Lib. Organisations and we went through a considerable amount of literature. We found that the basic theme seems to take up a reformist line, in favour of free abortion, free contraceptives, or a definite political line in favour of equal pay for women. There are a number of small groups whose object is difficult to define. The Branch is in agreement with the majority report of the Investigating Committee.

Ballard, Haringey: A committee was set up to investigate whether Women's Lib. Organisations were political or not and we had a majority and a minority report. We would like to complain about the fact that the E.C. did not circulate this important information prior to the decision being taken that membership was incompatible. Haringey is largely in general agreement with the views expressed in the minority report. We think that there is clearly a reformist campaign group basically an extension of existing political parties or organisations - Left Wing - all clearly incompatible, but there is a consciousness-raising group or discussion group whose main purpose is to discuss the role of women in society and their problems. In these cases we consider membership is not incompatible but is definitely beneficial. It should be remembered that those in the last category do not have 'membership' in the sense of a political party or Trade Union. It is our view that the Party has not given enough attention to this particular subject, nor deal with it as a specific issue in relation to our general objective. We should deal with it on a theoretical level and produce material. Ambridge: Ballard talks about our general objective. We do not have a general objective - we have one objective, it is the Object of the Party. The emancipation of the working class will include the emancipation of all. The establishment of socialism will liberate the lot. The working class should not be divided into sexes.

Barltrop: Ballard complains we have no articles on sexism - this is true. What surprises me is that we have a number of members in the Party who are keenly interested in this to whom we should be able to look for material about it. In the last two years the only article we have had on Women's Lib. we wrote ourselves. If the implication is that there is some kind of official ban on this subject, this is not true. We should be glad to have articles about it. I consider that Comrade Stefan's Minority Report reflects the muddle-headed attitude of many of our members today. Ballard says 'we should deal with this and produce material'. What does he want us to say? What we want to hear is what the Party should say and do and this is wanting.

Zucconi: Some of these movements are actually performing a disservice to women, and it is true that men are excluded from some of their discussions.

J.D'Arcy (E.C.): The E.C. passed their resolution of 'incompatibility' because they already had considerable information on the matter, and the member who seconded this resolution was Comrade Stefan. Both the majority and minority reports say membership is incompatible. Vanni: Re lack of articles, it seems that members can write to other journals on this subject but they do not send any articles to us. I would point out that the more activity members spend on these organisations the less activity they can give to the S.P.C.B. Ballard: We would hope that any organisation that is alive to what is going on around us would discuss these kind of issues. Most members do not want to have the matter or dismiss it as having been solved and not



want some sort of agreement on what kind of views we should put forward on this subject, re the role of women in society and their relation to the S.P.G.B. How many women are there in this Party? They are significantly absent. Why? It is because our organisation has failed to cover this subject adequately. It is a specific issue which is not catered for by the D. or P.

The E.C.'s Resolution, endorsed by Camden in their Amendment on the Agenda, that membership of Women's Lib. is 'incompatible' was CARRIED 31 - 4

Westminster: "That this Conference endorses the Camden Branch Statement on 'Industrial and Political Action' dated 25th September, 1973".

Walters, Westminster: The difficulty the Party has in making comments about Trade Unions arises out of the nature of the class struggle in that workers, whether socialist or not, are faced with the problem of selling their labour power at the highest possible price, and workers become members of Trade Unions irrespective of their political views. We have been accused of being armchair philosophers, of being divorced from the class struggle, but the reason for this is that when the Party has to analyse a particular situation arising out of the Trade Union struggle, more often than not there is nothing to recommend it that the Party can support. What most of the Trade Unions do we have to criticise. Our position is that we support all those activities of Trade Unions which are in the interests of the working class as a whole. A lot of Trade Union activity is reformist and the more you take part in reformist activities the less likely are you to be active in the socialist movement. Members of the Communist Party who are active in Trade Unions are furthering their own political ends. It is wrong to say that the Party is divorced from the Trade Unions - you should differentiate between what is applicable to a Trade Unionist and what is applicable to a member of the S.P.G.B. Ballard: Haringey Branch is not in favour of this Resolution being passed at the present time. Whilst we agree with a lot of the statement we still maintain that the distinction made between political and industrial action is erroneous when so many aspects of industrial activity have political implications. The statement classes as political what is really industrial. We have tried to draw up a definitive statement but it needs more investigation and we want the investigation to continue. Are Trade Unions anti-working class? They are of course closely related to reformist activity. What we should look to is the actual situation in which the workers are involved in a particular dispute. We were shocked at the attitude of E.C. members during the miners' struggle in not supporting them just because it was only the miners who were involved and not the rest of the working class. A large number of miners were aware that they were not a special case.

Barltrop: Referring to "Where we Stand". This statement signed by members of Haringey Branch quotes "Socialism can only be established by the revolutionary transformation of society through the conscious action of the working class democratically organised in all areas of political, economic and social activity" and "the task of socialists is to encourage by revolutionary propaganda and, where appropriate, active participation, working class struggle.....". Do they mean militant aims, which is what I take it to mean? Or is there some other purpose meant? Haringey are not coming clean about this. Some reforms may not support capitalism but they do take consciousness away from the work for socialism. The hopes of those who want the Industrial Relations Act repealed are vested in the return of a Labour Government. That remains the issue and Haringey should answer this. One thing concerning Russia - it is alleged that Trade Unions there are illegal. They are not, they exist. Take the Communist Party - they have always urged "be militant" but during the war the Communist Party was foremost in condemning strikes. Regarding the miners, the E.C. criticised their action because it was a question of differentials - like a League Table - we ought to be at the top and get more than other workers.

Vallance (giving his own point of view) The industrial struggle is not apart from the political struggle, it is a part of it. What socialists should be doing is participating in the economic class struggle with the aim of raising the level of the class struggle to where it reaches the highest level - where the working class can take over the whole of society, the ownership and democratic control of the means of production. They should participate in the struggle from a socialist view-point. They should be involved in Trade Union struggles as socialists, and this means taking certain attitudes. Because the Trade Union struggle is not what we should like it to be is no reason to run away from it.



Ambridge: The function of a Trade Union is to protect the interests of its members. Another function is to get as many members as possible: so that you come to the position where the miners are demanding to be at the head of some imaginary table, and you will shortly get the members of the A.E.U. approaching their employers not on behalf of the working class but on behalf of its members. Re the political side of Trade Unions, the majority who are interested in politics at all collect a political levy which is used for the support of that very well known "Workers' Party", the Labour Party. If you go into a Trade Union as a socialist you will soon be out on your neck. We do not criticise Trade Unions because they want to get more wages for their members but because they enter the political field: then we have no option but to oppose them.

Miller: There is a difference between industrial struggle and Trade Unions. Our socialist consciousness comes from the class struggle. I do not see how we can be part-time socialists. We must be socialists at all times. When workers are engaged in factory occupation I suggest they are challenging the right of the bosses to control their lives. This could mean that in a certain situation if socialists can see that a certain kind of activity is liable to lead to a socialist consciousness they should participate in it. The role of Trade Unions has been thoroughly incorporated into the system - they are bureaucratic - they are anti-working class struggles. In fact, they act as sellers of labour power. They split the working class. They are no use to the revolutionary movement. If workers are going to work for revolution they must find other forms of economic organisation to do this.

Knight: Trade Unionists only see their own problems. The only time you can make Trade Unions militant is when you have a large number of socialists in them. Trade Union action is sectional. Workers are divided against each other. We should not get involved in this question of militancy. And forget the leaders - the rank and file get the leaders they deserve.

The Resolution of Westminster, endorsing the Camden statement on Industrial and Political Action was

CARRIED 27 - 8

Edinburgh: "The Need to delete the whole of Rule 10".

Edinburgh: "The need to amend Rule 17 so as to limit the E.C.'s role to that of centrally controlling and publishing only that literature intended for national distribution. And the need to include in Rule 17 the clause: "Branches shall publish and control literature produced and distributed locally""

Edinburgh wanted the E.C. to control Party lit. nationally but Branches to be able to control the lit. produced and distributed locally. They would not do this in isolation from the rest of the Party. They would ask for E.C. opinion or that of the New Pamphlets Cttee. The amended rule would enable the Branch or Group to decide what to distribute if there was no time to send to London. They would send copies to the E.C. It would be more democratic - at the moment the E.C. are in a leadership position. It would increase socialist activity. We differ on various things and the E.C. does not necessarily hold the view of the majority of the members.

T.D'Arcy: (opposed to both). There are leaflets at present being distributed round the Conference which have not been seen by the rest of the Party. The Party should produce literature which is of universal rather than local interest, applicable to the working class as a whole. Time is really no factor - you can always 'phone. Vami: You have in Aberdeen a Group who are what a Branch of the Party should be like - they are very active. Socialist Party lit. is everywhere. The place is plastered with posters. Some of the leaflets are good but it is a pity these have been produced before the Rule has been amended. I would suggest that at the Del. Mtg. we should consider a compromise - the rule at present does not work well in practice and certainly will not when the Party grows larger.

A vote of thanks to the Canteen Committee for the good work they have done throughout Conference was carried unanimously.

The only Item on the Agenda not dealt with was Camden's Item "Revolutionary Socialists - What does this Mean Today?" and a floor resolution from Haringey which could not be discussed for lack of time.